

State of California
Department of Health Services

October 2, 2003

TO: ALL CALIFORNIA CHILDREN'S SERVICES (CCS) PANELED
AUDIOLOGISTS, CCS-APPROVED COMMUNICATION DISORDER
CENTERS, CCS-APPROVED HEARING AND SPEECH CENTERS,
NEWBORN HEARING SCREENING PROGRAM (NHSP) CERTIFIED
OUTPATIENT INFANT HEARING SCREENING PROVIDERS

SUBJECT: IMPORTANT INFORMATION YOU NEED TO KNOW

The California Department of Health Services is continuing to work toward full implementation of the California Newborn Hearing Screening Program (NHSP). California's program includes a tracking and follow up component designed to ensure that infants with possible hearing loss are linked with essential services including re-screening, diagnostic, medical and early intervention services, in a timely manner.

You play an important role in helping California achieve this goal.

Please read the attached Information Bulletin for important information you need to know. This Information Bulletin is the first of a series on various topics vital to the Newborn Hearing Screening Program. This bulletin and future bulletins will be posted on our web page at www.dhs.ca.gov/nhsp.

Thank you for your support in assuring that California's children with hearing loss have the opportunity to benefit from these important services.

Original signed by Maridee Gregory, M.D.

Maridee A. Gregory, M.D., Chief
Children's Medical Services Branch

Enclosure



Do your part to help California save energy. To learn more about saving energy, visit the following web site:
www.consumerenergycenter.org/flex/index.html

Information Bulletin #1

DID YOU KNOW?



The Law Mandates You to Report!

Article 6.5 (Newborn and Infant Hearing Screening, Tracking and Intervention Program), Section 124119 (d) of the Health and Safety Code states:

"All providers of audiological follow up and diagnostic services provided under this article shall report to the department or the department's designee information as specified by the department to be included in the department's reporting and tracking system."

- **The DHS Designee**

DHS contracts with various organizations to serve as regional Hearing Coordination Centers (HCCs). As the department's designees, the HCCs work with CCS-approved hospitals in developing hearing screening programs, perform quality assurance activities, and track infants who need additional services. The HCCs monitor the health care delivery system to assure that babies who fail the hearing screening test are not lost to follow-up. It is essential that infants who do not pass the screening tests receive prompt evaluation and intervention if appropriate; otherwise, the purpose and benefit of early screening is lost.

- **The HCC's Responsibility**

In order for the HCC's to meet their responsibility of assuring that infants with abnormal hearing screenings receive necessary follow-up, it is vital that they receive accurate, complete and legible Outpatient Screening and Diagnostic Audiologic Evaluation Reporting Forms from you at least weekly. Additionally, they need you respond in a timely manner to their requests for infant follow up information.

- **The Goal – Early Identification and Intervention Services**

We know that as audiology providers you want to deliver the best care possible to your patients. Newborn hearing screening is becoming a standard of care in California and across the nation. The goal is to identify hearing loss before infants are three months old and begin intervention services by six months of age. This approach has been shown to maximize age-appropriate language acquisition. The standards, guidelines, and protocols that DHS has established can serve as a safeguard for you when it comes to legal liability. Your reporting allows the HCCs to assure that infants who need screening, diagnostic, or intervention services are not lost to follow-up. However, if you fail to report, the HCC has no way to track these infants. If a child is lost to follow up due to a reporting failure and is determined at a later date to have a hearing loss, the parents could hold YOU responsible.

For additional guidance regarding the NHSP reporting requirements established for the NHSP, please contact the HCC in your area or the State NHSP office via the NHSP toll-free telephone system at 877-388-5301. Inquiries may also be submitted by e-mail to the State NHSP office at NHSP3@dhs.ca.gov.

As part of the health care team delivering essential services to these infants, you play a key role in making California's Newborn Hearing Screening Program the best in the nation!